

OPINION

No road to Doomsday

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S decision to stockpile neutron weapons will not bring war closer, nor will it stand in the way of arms control negotiations.

Despite the hysteria we can expect from the European Left, it is a prudent step which will enhance the capacity of the United States to defend Western interests.

The fact that it is a radiation weapon which kills people but does not destroy property has provoked some wholly irrational antipathy which the Russians were not slow to exploit when the issue last came up in 1978.

At that time President Carter eventually decided not to deploy neutron weapons in Europe—thus letting down Chancellor Schmidt of West Germany who had gone out on a limb to support the U.S.—in the hope that this would help arms control.

Since then, the Russians have continued their military build up at all levels. The Russians have already tested a neutron weapon of their own.

And President Reagan has decided that there is no more time to lose if the Russians are not to snatch another military advantage over the West.

The availability of neutron weapons plus the deployment of Cruise and Pershing missiles serves notice on the Soviets that they will not be allowed to secure decisive military superiority in Europe.

As it is, their three-to-one superiority in tanks is disturbing, and neutron shells would be particularly relevant here.

However, the name of the game is stability. Nobody wants a war which would end European civilisation. To that end, the balance of power which has preserved peace since 1945—the longest period this century—must be preserved.

On that basis it will be possible and desirable to negotiate with Russia—from strength not from weakness or fear.

The turn of the tide?

THE £58 million Canadian ship order will bring a bit of cheer on the Clyde where some good news is much needed. Are there other signs that the recession may be turning?

A survey by the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry in June and July concludes that both domestic and export markets are showing signs of improvement.

This squares with the encouraging report from the World Bank suggesting that the slump among the industrial countries has bottomed out and recovery should start by the end of the year or the beginning of 1982.

It is early days yet and the champagne should be kept in the fridge for the time being. A sustained recovery, as Mr John Biffen reiterated yesterday, will depend among other things on tight manning levels in industry. Competitive efficiency is the key to long term prosperity as the Japanese have shown so dramatically.

NEUTRON BOMBS ... OR NEUTRALITY?

Europe should be grateful to Reagan—at least he has the will to defend us!

PRESIDENT REAGAN'S decision to order the manufacture of the neutron bomb has sent a sudden shock through the two nervous systems of Europe, East and West.

The Soviet Union reacts with swift and violent alarm, declaring the decision to make "this most inhuman type of weapon" shows "the cannibalistic instincts" of Reagan's Administration.

In Western Europe governments, outwardly unflinched, are inwardly alarmed—not by the neutron bombs themselves, but by popular hostility towards them and the burgeoning weight in West Germany, Holland and Belgium, France, Italy, Scandinavia and in Britain, too, of neutralist, nuclear-disarming, anti-American opinion.

TYPICAL

The reaction of Michael Foot, old-time nuclear disarmament, is likely to be all too typical of Left-wing politicians in the West eager to exploit the growing pacifism and political disenchantment of the young.

Declaring that the Labour Party is "deeply hostile" to the neutron bomb, its leader said: "One of the most dangerous and nauseating features of the neutron bomb is that it lowers the nuclear threshold and could lead us further towards the maniacal



Thatcher: Ready to back Reagan



Foot: Old-time nuclear disarmament



Mitterrand: On the sidelines



Schmidt: Agrees to have missiles

By GEORGE GALE

idea of a form of so-called limited nuclear warfare." As nuclear weapons go, the neutron bomb is small-scale and civilised being directed not against civilians in cities but against soldiers in tanks. It is the most efficient and economical way the West can offset the Soviets' massive superiority in armour.

But its name, and its characteristic of destroying men and not machines or buildings, makes it a terrible and very potent weapon of propaganda.

Moscow has already led one brilliant "Ban the N-bomb" campaign which made President Carter change his mind to deploy the weapon. The Kremlin's public fury that President Reagan has restored Carter's original decision is thus doubly understandable, for to its genuine military concern it adds its hypocritical yelp of moral outrage.

NATO's chiefs have a different fear. They are all agreed on the potential usefulness of neutron bombs in meeting a massive attack by Soviet tanks: no argument here.

But their fear, expressed to President Reagan by Secretary of State and former

NATO C-in-C General Haig, is that popular opposition to the neutron bombs in West Europe will imperil the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing missiles in Britain, West Germany, Italy, Belgium and Holland from 1983 onwards.

Mrs Thatcher has agreed to the missiles being stationed here—but a Labour Government led by Foot would have them removed. Chancellor Schmidt has agreed to their deployment in West Germany, but his party is opposed to him on the issue.

SYSTEMS

Holland has no government at the moment; and one of the points of dispute is the American request for missile sites. Belgium waits on Holland. In Italy the Left is opposed.

NATO's defensive posture depends upon these long-range missile systems—108 Pershing II ballistic missiles, 464 Tomahawk cruise missiles—which the alliance agreed back in 1979 to deploy in these five countries. That deployment is now threatened.

General Haig asked President Reagan to defer his neutron bomb decision to await a more receptive European attitude. Reagan has declined to wait. He is unwilling to have decisions on American arms subject to any kind of European veto.

So what we now have is the United States pressing ahead, regardless of—or at any rate disregarding—European hesitations.

Europe used to fear American isolationism, with good cause. It is not so long since Henry Kissinger gave as his view that the United States would never risk nuclear war for Europe's sake.

Europe was warned not to trust in the shelter of the American nuclear umbrella. Kissinger's view may have been eccentric; but it reinforced European suspicions of America's latent isolationism.

Now, we have the United States distrusting Western Europe, also with good cause. America fears European neutralism. The deep anti-Americanism which infects

all of Europe's Left-wing, a great deal of its centre and that part of its right which ought to know better but does not, is welling up strongly.

Europe used to believe that it could not rely upon America. Now America sees that it may no longer be able to depend upon its European allies.

America, under Reagan, now stands firm—where two years ago, under Carter, it wobbled. Europe now looks to be becoming infirm, wobbling into neutralism.

Thatcher is sound. Schmidt is sound. But for how long?

Britain under Foot would be no dependable ally. West Germany without Schmidt would excite no confidence. And what present worth to the alliance is Mitterrand's France, with his government containing communists? Or whoever it is in Italy?

Western Europe is rich enough and populous enough to be able to defend itself against any Soviet onslaught; but it has not the will to prepare itself to do so. Only the United States has the will; and we should be very grateful for it.

Reagan's neutron bomb decision displays the will which Western Europe evidently lacks.

TESTED

The Soviets display a similar will: French defence minister Charles Hernu yesterday reminded us that the Soviets had already tested neutron warheads—as Brezhnev boasted in 1978. Hernu implied the French were developing them. Britain could, and should, do likewise.

If we do not, if we object to the United States making neutron bombs and deploying their strategic missiles on our territory, we will have ceased to be serious about defending ourselves.

We will have opted for a "neutral" Western Europe which cannot but become the next extension of Russia's European empire.

This is what those who oppose the American neutron bomb would have us become. This is what European neutralists and unilateral disarmers like Michael Foot—whether they know it and like it or not—are working and striving towards.

This is your captain speaking...

GIANT ships capable of being operated by one man's voice are on the horizon.

A 170,000-ton coal and iron ore carrier, now being built at a shipyard near here, will have a system allowing its main engine to be un automatically by voice commands.

And although the Seamen's Union won't like it, the builder is working on improvements to have every shipboard operation controlled in this way.

All we've done is marry a standard voice recognition device to the already heavily automated engine control

By GEOFFREY MURRAY
From Tokyo

system," says Kenjiro Hikaka, of Sumitomo Heavy Industries.

The captain will merely have to give the order "full speed ahead," which will be repeated back to him by the voice sensor for confirmation.

If the machine has got it right, the captain will say "yes." Only on hearing this will the machine translate the command into an electronic signal to the engines.

The present device will recognise 11 different orders for engine operations, but only from people whose "voice

prints" are registered in its computer.

With the aid of a microphone and earphone set, the captain will be able to operate up to 150 feet from the wheelhouse.

For now, says Mr Hikaka, the system will not lead to any reduction in crew, but this is the ultimate aim.

The Japanese say it should be possible to operate the steering in the same way, and they are now looking at other applications above and below deck.

Loading and unloading of

cargo could, in future, be done by robots controlled by one man's voice, said Mr Hikaka, who does not see the unions objecting.

"These days not many men want to go to sea and no one wants to do dirty, heavy jobs anymore."

New applications of voice recognition keep emerging.

The Japanese are also marketing microwave ovens that can be told what to do. And some can even talk back.

Sharp Corporation has a "smart" voice synthesiser, calculator that repeats its computations in a "secretary-like" tone and a system allowing users to talk to machines instead of using a keyboard, is on the cards.